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the[1,definite article]

Main Entry: **the**

Pronunciation: *before consonants usually [t̬]k, before vowels usually [t̬]E, esp Southern before vowels also [t̬]k; for emphasis before titles and names or to suggest uniqueness often 't̬]E*

Function: *definite article*

Etymology: Middle English, from Old English *thē*, masc. demonstrative pronoun & definite article, alteration (influenced by oblique cases -- as *thas*, genitive -- & neuter, *thæt*) of *sē*; akin to Greek *hō*, masculine demonstrative pronoun & definite article -- more at **THAT**

Date: before 12th century

1 a -- used as a function word to indicate that a following noun or noun equivalent is definite or has been previously specified by context or by circumstance <put *the* cat out> **b** -- used as a function word to indicate that a following noun or noun equivalent is a unique or a particular member of its class <*the* President> <*the* Lord> **c** -- used as a function word before nouns that designate natural phenomena or points of the compass <*the* night is cold> **d** -- used as a function word before a noun denoting time to indicate reference to what is present or immediate or is under consideration <in *the* future> **e** -- used as a function word before names of some parts of the body or of the clothing as an equivalent of a possessive adjective <how's *the* arm today> **f** -- used as a function word before the name of a branch of human endeavor or proficiency <*the* law> **g** -- used as a function word in prepositional phrases to indicate that the noun in the phrase serves as a basis for computation <sold by *the* dozen> **h** -- used as a function word before a proper name (as of a ship or a well-known building) <*the* Mayflower> **i** -- used as a function word before the plural form of a numeral that is a multiple of ten to denote a particular decade of a century or of a person's life <life in *the* twenties> **j** -- used as a function word before the name of a commodity or any familiar appearance of daily life to indicate reference to the individual thing, part, or supply thought of as at hand <talked on *the* telephone> **k** -- used as a function word to designate one of a class as the best, most typical, best known, or most worth singling out <this is *the* life> <*the* Pill> -- sometimes used before a personal name to denote the most prominent bearer of that name

2 a (1) -- used as a function word with a noun modified by an adjective or by an attributive noun to limit the application of the modified noun to that specified by the adjective or by the attributive noun <*the* right answer> <Peter *the* Great> (2) -- used as a function word before an absolute adjective or an ordinal number <nothing *but* *the* best> <due on *the* first> **b** (1) -- used as a function word before a noun to limit its application to that specified by a succeeding element in the

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sentence <the poet Wordsworth> <the days of our youth> <didn't have the time to write> (2) -- used as a function word after a person's name to indicate a characteristic trait or notorious activity specified by the succeeding noun <Jack the Ripper>

3 a -- used as a function word before a singular noun to indicate that the noun is to be understood generically <the dog is a domestic animal> **b** -- used as a function word before a singular substantivized adjective to indicate an abstract idea <an essay on the sublime>

4 -- used as a function word before a noun or a substantivized adjective to indicate reference to a group as a whole <the elite>

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Pronunciation Symbols

\&\ as **a** and **u** in **abut**
 \&\ as **e** in **kitten**
 \&\ as **ur/er** in **further**
 \a\ as **a** in **ash**
 \A\ as **a** in **ace**
 \a\ as **o** in **mop**
 \au\ as **ou** in **out**
 \ch\ as **ch** in **chin**

\e\ as **e** in **bet**
 \E\ as **ea** in **easy**
 \g\ as **g** in **go**
 \i\ as **i** in **hit**
 \I\ as **i** in **ice**
 \j\ as **j** in **job**
 \ng\ as **ng** in **sing**
 \O\ as **o** in **go**

\o\ as **aw** in **law**
 \oi\ as **oy** in **boy**
 \th\ as **th** in **thin**
 \[th]\ as **th** in **the**
 \u\ as **oo** in **loot**
 \u\ as **oo** in **foot**
 \y\ as **y** in **yet**
 \zh\ as **si** in **vision**

For more information see the [Guide To Pronunciation](#).

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